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MORNING, NOON AND NIGHT

BY

GLENN WARD DRESBACH

In the Paths of the Wind

The Road to Everywhere

MORNING, NOON AND NIGHT

BY

GLENN WARD DRESBACH

BOSTON
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY
1920

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PREFATORY NOTE

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GLENN WARD DRESBACH
Late Captain, S. C., U. S. A.

Tyrone, New Mexico
September 9, 1919

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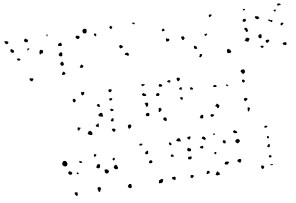

CONTENTS .

	Page
Songs in the Burro Mountains	11
Songs while the Apple Blossoms Fall	13
The Nest of the Bluebird	16
Goodnight Song	25
While the Caravan Rested	26
I Made You a Song	31
Song for a Guitar	32
Songs While the Leaves Are Falling	33
The Dreamers	37
O Restless Spirit	38
Defeat	39
Chains	40
The Ship Without a Port	41
The Village of the Doves	50
I Heard a Thrush When Twilight Came	51
The Colonel's Lady	52
Since Youth is all for Gladness	56
A Morning Road Song	57
Appointments	58
To One Belovéd	59
The Price of Corn	60
Song, "I Have Loved the Rainbows"	62
You are not of a Time or Place	63
Songs After the War	64
The Murderer God Sentenced	67
The Dance	70
A Pipe Smoker to a Coquette	71
Autumn Nocturne	72
Follow the Crows	73
Songs While the First Snow Falls	75
Seeds of the Thistle	79
A Young Girl Flees the Coming Storm	82

CONTENTS

Winds That Have Moved the Friendly Trees	83
Lonesomeness	84
A Farewell	85
The Grave	86
The Man Who Would Not Go To War	87
Dewdrops	89
Song, "You Ask Me Sometimes"	90
I Had Forgotten	91
Christmas Eve, 1917	92
The Desert and the Sea	93
Song, "Would You Go in Chariot"	94
Margarita	95
The Loquacious Outlaw	96
To the Night Wind	98
Camouflage	101
The Lark and the Guinea Hens	104

MORNING, NOON AND NIGHT

SONGS IN THE BURRO MOUNTAINS

I.

I know a little blue-eyed pool
  That lies among wind-shaken pines,
And from its depths unstirred and cool
  Two streams go forth in silver lines,
Swift, leaping, twisting, shallow things
With free wild beauty such as clings
To memory without a cause.
Then half a mile away they pause,
It seems, bewildered, in new lands,
And creep back to the still, bleached sands,
And go from sight . . . Oh, are these streams
The little pool's unconquered Dreams?
In these high places can it be
They know of, and would find, the Sea!

II.

It seems sometimes that I have been
  A crag wind-crippled cedars clung
About with roots, while far-off green
  Of waving grasses fresh and young
Taunted my vision—wondered why
I knew that I must see them die!

III.

There is a hut far up the path.
  Its door has fallen, and the sun
Looks in by day, and many stars
  Look in when day is done.

There is an idle mining claim—
  Dug into rock, a fling at Chance!
But, God, for what there is not here
  Look on his grave in France!

IV.

I would build myself a house
  On this mountain top today,
Not to shun the World, or feel
  It was shutting me away,
  But that I might come at times
  Little things had baffled me,
And look out, with setting sun,
  On Immensity.

SONGS WHILE THE APPLEBLOSSOMS FALL

I.

Pink and white on the grasses
  The scattered blossoms fall,
And winds go whispering over
  The moss-grown orchard wall.

The trees like brides are dropping
  The bridal veil and gown . . .
Pink and white on the grasses
  The blooms are drifting down.

But in the leaves is music
  Like fairy violins—
Bloom-rapture softly passes,
  Fruit-growing now begins.

But what has gone, with blossoms,
  No fruit gives me or you?
Something that goes from dreaming
  When the dream comes true!

II.

I saw a grown girl wading
  A brook among the trees,
With sun-warmed water dancing
  About her dimpled knees.

Three years ago I called her
  Spindle Legs, and then
She kicked a cloud of water
  And waded on again.

But now—she heard my footsteps
  And cried, "Oh, go away!"
Blushing, she smiled and added,
  "I am sixteen today!"

III.

There is an old tree standing
  Among the younger trees,
And from its weathered branches
  No blooms fall on the breeze.

And as I watch I wonder
  At last how it will be
When Spring may come, and passing
  Has not a gift from me.

IV.

A gipsy passed me with a song
  Where men went out to sow,
And he went down the winding road
  Where the maples grow.

And still his song came back to me
  When he was far away,
"The Flask holds but a pint of wine—
  Tomorrow is Today!"

"My love has made a tent for me
  From stars above the hill—
Go break your heart, and build yourself
  A stone house, if you will!"

V.

I made my Love a moon-song
  Just a year ago,
And hand in hand we wandered
  Where the stars were low . . .

I made my Love a moon-song,
  A wistful silver tune,
And then her heart danced to it,
  And then she whispered soon,
"Now I have your moon-song—
  And I want the moon!"

I led her to a near pool . . .
  The moon was in it, too!
I grasped the moon in water—
  The water trickled through
My fingers—and I held out
  My hand as beggars do!

"A Dreamer has as many lives
As he can dream. Within the hives
Of bees is stored the wealth they find
Roaming the pathways of the Wind,"
Said John, the Dreamer, on a day
We watched the water-lilies sway
Languidly and restfully
In a brook that sought the sea
Longingly, yet playfully.

He said, "It seems that long ago
I saw the apple blossoms blow
In a place fairer than this,
Found there wondrous lips to kiss
While the blossoms pink and white,
Touched with darts of golden light,
Fell on my belovéd's breast.
And in that place was the Bluebird's nest!

"Or else why have I always sought
Through many a life and many a thought
The Bluebird's nest I found
And lost, O long ago?
In an enchanted ground
That still I seem to know! . . .
Long, O very long, ago
The Circle started. It must end
Where it started, friend!
Years and years after

The sweet, clear laughter
May ring again in that same place,
And I may see again her face
And see the apple blossoms fall
Upon her breast,
Hear Bluebirds call—
And find again the Bluebird's nest! . . .

"After I lost my first Life's glory
I remember hazily,
As in an ancient half-told story,
How the battle called to me.
And I see the flash of spears,
Dimmed now by the mist of years,
And I feel, somehow, the battle
Surging through me, hear the rattle
Of the shields and see grim faces
That I looked on long ago,
O how very long ago!
And I hear the gasps and groans,
Thuds of blows, and hollow moans,
And the battle-songs, long-sung
In a strange remembered tongue . . .

"I remember hazily
How the battle raged all day
In the mountains near the sea.
Then as daylight slipped away
I sunk deeper than the sea
Into emptiness. No more
I remember of the battle.

I remember that a door
Closed on me. I hear the rattle
Of the chains that bound me fast
In a dungeon. Long days passed
In a stillness like the mold
On the walls all scarred and old.
And there I dreamed I saw the sway
Of branches on a golden day,
And saw the apple blossoms fall
Over my belovéd's breast.
In my dreams I heard the call,
Aching with a mild unrest,
Of the Bluebirds flitting, flying,
While I lay in cold hell dying,
Living—dying,
Dying—living,
Gaining nothing, nothing giving!

"I remember hazily
How I heard men calling me,
Saw the dungeon doors swing wide.
Blinking, I was led outside
To the sun!
Still I feel the leap and run
Of the glad blood in my heart.
Once again I was a part
Of the world that called to me . . .

"Yet often still it seems to me
I see cold walls rise gruesomely
About me in the hush of things.

Faintly I hear a bird that sings
Out in the sunlight, glad and free,
With things that are denied to me.
I feel the creep of chill and dread,
Always alive—yet sometimes dead!

"I remember hazily
How I thrilled again to see
White sails gleaming on the bay.
And I longed to be away,
Out into the endless blue,
Seeking something that I knew
Could not give me peace or rest.
So I sailed into the West—
Long years after, so it seems,
In a Life—or in my dreams!

"I seem to smell the salty spray,
And see the low shore fade away
Into the haze, and then the sea
Spoke and sang, and dreamed with me!

"Then an anger at my Fate
Burned in me, a lean red fire.
So it seems I came to hate
All that hindered my desire.
And the sea grew wilder, too.
Over all the open blue
Fell a writhing mask of cloud.
Voices in the winds were loud,
Loud and wild. Then came the still

Madness before the storm that came
Suddenly with swords of flame,
Bellowing upon the sea.
A strange gladness stirred in me!

"I remember hazily
Rising, falling with the sea,
Wearily and dreamily,
On a spar alone, alone,
In the vastness, with the moan
Of the spent winds over me.
Hours later—hours of hell—
With a blindly groping hand
I crawled from the sea to sand
On a bare beach. There I fell
In deep sleep—to dream, to dream
Of an old enchanted place
And of my belovéd's face!
From the dream
I awoke and climbed a hill
Crowned with trees and very still
But for great birds over me,
Crying in from sea.
There I found a cool, clear rill,
Found ripe fruit upon a tree
And I drank and ate my fill.
Then I roamed across the hill,
Heard the waters dash and moan
And I found I was alone
On a little isle.
There I stayed a weary while . . .

Now and then I saw a sail,
Shouted, wept, to no avail—
Ever sails passed by.
Nothing but the sea bird's cry
Answered me.
And I wished my soul could fly,
Like the white sails out at sea,
Out of me, leaving me
In the place I crept to die.

"And often still it seems to me
I see the gleam of sails at sea,
Of sails that pass and leave me still
Upon my silent hill.
I see the waves that toss and moan,
With worlds before me—yet alone
While fade the sails in sunset fire
Out toward the lands of my Desire!

"Then one day came a little ship
That roamed there on a pleasure trip,
And I was saved. No gladness
Lifted my sullen madness.
I saw the island fade
All touched with amethyst and jade,
As in a dream that had not known
The days that I lived there alone.

"I remember hazily
That I saw from far at sea
A city's spires arise

Into the leaden skies—
And then forgetfulness! The page
Of Dreams is here a blank. An Age
Passes in silence. Then, again
I lived within a world of men
And women, in a place where feet
Throbbed in my brain as on the street.
I remember hazily
Crowds that hurried on with me—
Painted faces, weary faces,
Rags and velvet gowns and laces,
Gray-day clothes and play-day clothes!
Never any sweet repose
Filled me. On from place to place
I was swept with frenzied pace.
I remember rather clearly
That all pleasure cost me dearly.
Youth's enchantment left me there—
I read stories in a stare,
In the lines of mouth and brow,
Even as I read them now.
I remember how I toiled
In a place where dreams were spoiled,
Gaining wealth, and spending it,
Spending it, and lending it—
Laughing harshly, hungrily
For a joy lost to me!

"I remember hazily
That a girl came up to me
As I strolled a park one night

When the airs of Spring were light.
I saw the lights reveal her face,
Its lure, its light, its plain disgrace,
And maddened suddenly
I clasped her close; as suddenly
I hurled her arms from me.
I caught the scent of apple bloom
That seemed to rise from out a tomb
That was in me. I heard the call
Of Bluebirds far, O far away.
And that is all—
An old Dream held me in its sway
An old Love-life would have its way!

"I lived again within a city,
And little hope and little pity
Walked the streets with me.
I remember hazily
How wealth fell into my hands,
How I gained in power and pride,
How the world walked at my side
Bowing—holding out its hands!

"I remember hazily
That the lights gleamed over me
In my mansion near the sea,
That my guests were in the rooms.
Subtle smiles and thick perfumes
Were about me everywhere.
Each face seemed a mask to wear
Brazenly or fearfully
In my mansion near the sea.

"On a starry balcony
With a woman that was fair,
I remember hazily
How the clean, sea-freshened air
Blew a lock of perfumed hair
Till it touched my cheek.
Then she swayed, as in a mist
In my arms. Her lips I kissed
And she kissed mine. Then suddenly,
While I listened, strangely weak,
I heard a Bluebird calling me,
Far and far away!

"That is why I left next day
All the city streets behind
For the Pathways of the Wind . . .

"I shall seek—and I shall find
Some day, in this Life or the next,
So says my golden dream-book's text,
My Dream's enchanted place,
And look on my belovéd's face
While the blossoms pink and white,
Touched with darts of golden light,
Fall upon her breast.
And I shall find the Bluebird's nest!
O I shall find the Bluebird's nest!

"Long, O very long ago,
Touched with golden gleam and glow,
The Circle started. It must end
Where it started, friend!"

GOODNIGHT SONG

No night comes down with stars for me
  But that I think of you.
There is a half-heard symphony,
  As if the Silence knew
The words you whispered. In the Spring
When grass and leaf are whispering
I hear you whisper. Summer brings
With fruit among the whispering leaves
A tone, and then my soul believes
In all that lives, in all that sings.
And when the Autumn moonlight weaves
Its magic over things that pass,
The grain, the leaves, the drooping grass,
Because you speak in all these things
My soul looks on with guided eyes,
And then believes in all that dies.
Ah, gone is olden mystery!
  I know now what your spirit knew—
No night comes down with stars for me
  But that I think of you!

WHILE THE CARAVAN RESTED

All day I had been riding on the plains
While heat-waves rippled like a hateful sea
And hot winds curled the grasses. Here and there
I saw a cornfield with its tassels dried
And drooping with defeated hopes of growth.
Late in the afternoon I reached a house
Where two small cottonwoods stood wearily.
Their thirsting leaves stirred harshly in the wind.
I found the place deserted, and the floors
Of two small rooms were covered with the dust
Of many wind-storms. In a spider's corner
I found some school books scattered on the floor.
And as I looked through one of them I saw
A little picture stuck between the leaves.
A girl with full lips and a mass of hair
Smiled from the picture, but it seemed her eyes
Were looking far for many things unfound.
Impatiently I threw the book aside
Where I had found it, yet kept wondering
About the girl, while I went on my way.
A little further on I turned to look
Back at that small house with its little trees
Drooped in the heat. My horse was lathered white
Along the neck, and I was glad to find
A sturdy group of trees some miles ahead.
The farmer came to meet me at his gate,
And when my horse was watered and turned loose
To eat the grass grown high around the well
The farmer sat with me beneath the trees

And talked of drouth. His old eyes squinted hard
Across the level lands, his knotted hands
Trembled with weariness, it seemed to me.
He said, "This is a land that sometimes gives
And sometimes takes. You need a hardy soul
To fight its moods and win . . . My children went
To find work in the city, and I think
That I am glad of it although my wife
Is rather lonely. I get lonely, too,
Old as I am, but I must keep the farm.
I studied for the law, but failed at that
And took this homestead years ago, and worked
And made a living while my children grew."

I had been thinking of the house I found
Deserted, with its little cottonwoods
Dying for water.
Then I said to him,
"I passed an empty house this afternoon,
A few miles back along the road, and felt
The power of these plains against a heart."

"Jane Hastings lived there for a year," he said,
"And then she left the place, just as it stands,
One day last Spring. I'll tell you how it was.
Two years ago she came to teach the school,
And boarded here with us. Her folks were dead
And we looked after her as best we could.
She was a queer girl, pretty, full of life,
But rather sullen. She would sit for hours,
Beneath these trees, when she came home from school

And look across the plains. My wife would say,
"That girl needs love. She's not the kind to be
Always alone."
But no young men lived near
And so her days were only work and dreams
That were unrealized. At last she said
She had decided to take up some land.
I helped her fix it up and when her place
Was ready she moved there and lived alone.
We went to see her sometimes or she stopped
To visit us when she came back from school.
She talked about her plans to save enough
From teaching and her homestead for a year
In college, then she'd start her nervous talk
Of gowns and dances, and her eyes would burn.
Last Spring came early and she seemed to be
More restless every day. When school was out
She went into the city for a week.
When she came back there was a bitterness
About her that we had not known before.
My wife said, "Either some one hurt her pride
Or some young fool has loved her for a week
And then forgot her kisses."
For awhile
We did not see her. Then we went one night
To talk to her. There was a great full moon
Over the plains and winds were sweet with scents
Of growing grasses. Jane was lying down—
Stretched out in her best dress upon the grass,
Shaken with weeping. When she heard us there
She rushed into the house and would not talk.

So we sat down upon the porch and waited
As old folks can. She came out afterwhile
And talked with us. My wife asked her to come
And live with us again, but Jane refused,
Although she thanked us.

While I worked next day
In that cornfield you see along the road,
I saw some covered wagons—six of them
As I remember. They stopped at the house.
I saw the gipsy women go to beg,
And I stood watching till I saw my wife
Send them away. Then I went on with work.
At noon my wife said, "If the gipsies stopped
At Jane's house she'd be frightened. Better go
And see that she's all right."

And so I went.
The gipsy caravan had stopped. I saw
The smoke of little fires where they cooked.
Women in bright dress walked about the place.
As I drew near I saw a handsome fellow
Talking to Jane. Her face was flushed. He held
One of her hands, and while he talked to her
Old women watched and cackled mirthlessly.
I walked among them and called out to Jane.
She turned and looked at me, and then she laughed.
With one swift movement she pulled down her hair;
It showered to her waist and caught the sun.
She did not speak. Her eyes flashed out at me
A challenge—and I saw her as she was!"

"The gipsy women laughed at me, the men
Smoked quietly. I turned and went away."

"Half way back home I turned about again,
Hoping that I might win her senses back.
Before I reached the house the caravan
Was starting on its way across the plains.
I rode beside the wagons. In the third
I saw Jane sitting at the driver's side,
And they were talking, laughing, while the wind
Sweet with the scents of growing grasses came
To blow Jane's hair and hide her eyes from me."

I MADE YOU A SONG

I made you a song of rain along the tree-tops
  In an old woodland that the World forgets,
Then found that Spring had wandered to a hillside
  And written it in violets.

I made you a song of an old, nameless longing
  Where you had walked the moon-mad sands with me,
Then heard, above my heart, forever singing
  The vasty longing of the Sea.

And now I make you but a song of loving,
  Of young blood thrilled and lips that touch and cling—
Something the Spring cannot write out in flowers
  Nor waters of the Sea can sing . . .

But with the violets upon the hillside
  This song of love may fade, in season die—
Only is sure the old Sea's vasty longing,
  And yet I cannot tell you why!

SONG FOR A GUITAR

I gave you robes of rainbows
  And my Dreams' silver shoon,
And sang to you of hill-roads
  That go to meet the Moon.

And now you think the splendor
  Is all your own. You live
Forgetful of the giving
  That gave you things to give.

I have more robes of rainbows,
  And shoon for roads apart—
But what if I had given
  To you my heart?

SONGS WHILE THE LEAVES ARE FALLING

I.

There is a slender tree that grows
  Beside a road where people pass;
Through it a wind that chills it goes
  And shakes its leaves upon the grass,
And I, who watched these same leaves grow
  All fresh and young, and Summer long
  Heard their young whispers and their song,
Then saw their golden passage, know
  Two golden leaves are clinging now
  Upon one little twisted bough
  Half-hidden, and when winds are high
  Two rustling golden banners fly,
  Tiny, but bright, against the gray
  Of troubled skies that care not how
  Leaves cling awhile or drift away.

When will these golden banners come
From their high place to join the dumb
And driven throng that moves with Death?
Each day I look with hurried breath,
And wish that they might wave and cling
To see the promise of the Spring.

  And O, my Heart, so you may hold
  Two Dreams that Life may turn to gold—
  When all my other dreams must pass
  Like leaves blown down upon the grass.

II.

When once the bud has made the rose
  It cannot be the bud again—
Its passion stirs, its glory grows
  Beyond its being then.

So, Dream, since you the Real have made,
  You cannot be the dream and rest—
For I have kissed her lips and laid
  My head upon her breast.

III.

The birds are flying to the South.
  Their calls drift down the skies.
The song that trembled at my lips
  Falls pierced with doubt, and dies.

The birds are flying South to trees
  With green leaves brightly spread . . .
Shall all my singing dreams leave me
  When Youth is dead?

IV.

If I had choice to be a tree
  I would not be an evergreen,
Living with peaceful certainty,
  Seeing the same boughs I had seen
Since I had sprouted, always sure
My greenery would still endure
The change of seasons, never thrilled
With rapturous leaves, while nothing killed

But slow, dull Age . . . O I would be
Any kind of growing tree
That knows the magic and the thrill
Of glowing leaves, that frost can kill
Only by turning them to gold.
O I would stand with branches bold
Braving the winds until again
The benediction of warm rain
Fell on the earth, and song came up
From all my roots, and I could sup
And dine with all the gods of Earth,
And fear no death, grown wise in birth.

V.

The man may be the child again
  When Autumn winds in shadow moan,
And the cold rains beat the window pane
  And a heart feels all alone.

I will not bear this loneliness,
  This madness, this unrest—
I shall go out and gently press
  The dead leaves to my breast.

VI.

What is this voice that calls
  Like a dream in the night,
Bringing thoughts that are flushed
  All rosy-bright?

The voice says, "I am the Love
  That came in the Spring,
And whispered until you lived
  In my whispering.

I am the Love that took
  The wrinkles from your brow."
And I answer the voice in the night,
  "It is Autumn now.

And I hear the whisper of leaves
  That fade, and silently
The dark clouds pass . . . Be gone—
  Or comfort me!"

VII.

Drunken fellows, all together
  Let us dance away,
Gold leaf, yellow leaf,
  And leaf all crimson-gay,—
We are drunken with the World
  That bids us on our way.

Drunken fellows, all together
  Let us outward fare
With a chuckling madness
  Through the frosted air—
Now the World is through with us
  Show we do not care!

THE DREAMERS, 1917

War gnawed the bones of Nations; Hunger went
Into the hearts and souls of people. Then
The Dreamers called their tenderest Dreams and sent
Them out to stay the carnage of brave men . . .
Back to the Dreamers came the Dreams' lament,
"O take your Swords, that we may live again!"

O RESTLESS SPIRIT

O restless Spirit, roaming toward the Sun
And longing for the coolness of the dark,
Or roaming in the shadows with a mark
Set on the hills where Morning may be won!
You are the power that has moved each one
Whose heart has met the morning with the lark
Or gone alone to hells where move the stark
And speechless Dreams, with dreaming never done.

O restless Spirit that is mine, I seek
Peace for you in the beauties of the world,
Passing through pain to find them, still aware
Something must go unfound until in bleak
And final night my last of Life is hurled,
Too wise for faith, too faithful for despair.

DEFEAT

There is defeat where death gives anodyne
And all desires of the battle wane
In deep forgetfulness, and the one slain
Lies with his face turned toward the firing-line.
There is defeat where flesh fails the design
Of Spirit, and the groping, tortured brain
Sees glories lost it cannot win again
And wears its self out like effect of wine.

But no defeat is quite so imminent
To common ways as the defeat Success
Turns into when it puts aside the dreams
That made it be, and, somehow, grows content
With what it is, forever growing less
Until it is not, and no longer seems.

CHAINS

Why did you not hold me with chains
  Of steel all dull and cold
That I might strain against their strength
  As long as they could hold?

That I might see the links sink in
  My flesh and make blood flow,
While I could hope to break my chains
  And hurl them down and go!

But in these chains you hold me with
  Only my Spirit frets—
For who could use brute force to break
  A chain of violets!

THE SHIP WITHOUT A PORT

The tropic island reached into the sea
With lengths of land, here, there and everywhere,
Stretched out like tendrils of an octopus.
The place, for all its crowded trees and vines,
Its flaming colors and its haunting calls,
Was very lonely. In a narrow bay
We found a village, and the negroes came
With fruits to sell, and language understood,
Since we had heard the English tongue, at times,
Treated almost as badly in the States.

The only white man in the place came down
To visit us when he had heard our boat
Was anchored in the bay. He had some land
The negroes worked for him, but best of all,
As we found out that afternoon, he had
A tale to tell.
The bay was very still.
We sat upon the deck and watched the sea
Taking siesta under canopies
Of endless, throbbing blue. We saw a boat
Draw near, with spread of sail that made our own
Seem greater. Negroes waded out with fruit
And water, and the ship turned out again,
A white sail seeking silence as if driven
By more than sleepy wind.
The white man stirred
After his eyes had followed it from sight.
He said, "That is a ship without a port.

It sails about this island day by day,
And month by month, and year by year, yet never
Anchors for long, save when storms drive it in
To some unhabited and desolate bay . . .
A man and woman live upon that boat.
It is their world, and like their boat they have
No port of all the endless world of ports."

"That sounds uncanny," said the mate, "The ship
Gave me the shivers, and it seemed deserted
Except for that lean gray man at the wheel."

"The woman keeps from sight," our guest replied.
"I have not seen her, when the ship was in,
Since that day years ago, when she went out
Upon its deck and waved a last goodbye
To their unseen plantation in the hills."

He paused and then continued with his talk,
In monotone like one who has become
A talker to himself in loneliness,
"Bananas grow upon this island. Miles
And miles of land beyond this bay were filled
With trees. The man who sails that boat we saw
Owned great plantations now gone back again
To be the jungle. I was doctor then
For the plantation, and I stay here now
To treat the negroes, and live—in a way—
Because there is no other place for me."

"The man was rich and kindly then. At first
He lived alone, and we would often sit
The evening hours together . . . Then he grew
Restless and morbid from the loneliness
And started drinking heavily. He found
That did not make things right, and so he went
On a vacation, and when he returned
A glowing woman came with him. He said
They had been married on the Isthmus; so
Their new life started, and I often felt
Things were not well with them after a month.
She roamed about the house as if it were
A hateful cage, and she was like a leopard,
Lithe, slender, full of color, full of fire,
With devils and angels fighting in her eyes.
She was a half-breed—Spanish—something else,
And she was wine and fire and silk and hell
All in a parcel shaped most beautifully
To lure the eyes and make the heart go mad.
The man, McGregor, (let me call him that)
Was often gone on business. Then his wife
Would wear her maddest gowns and drink her wine
Until she lost what little sense she had
To start with. So the trouble started off.
McGregor's foreman was a half-breed, too.
Spanish—and something else. Before he came
To work on the plantation he had been
The master of a trading ship that sailed
Among the islands. He was young and full
Of all that makes the Tropics. Handsome, too,
But rather frail from fever, so he said.

Well, when McGregor was away this man
Began to creep up to McGregor's house
And spend a quiet night of it, I heard.
I *knew* McGregor—knew that he would kill,
And that, in spite of all their family fights,
Would fight the Devil for her. And I knew
His heart was in her power just as much
As if it had been chained to her, to throw
Into her veins the hot, strong blood of his.
And, knowing this, I did not dare to tell
McGregor what I knew.
One day when rain
Had started pounding on the island fields
The foreman came to me. He said, 'I'm seek
With fevair, Doctair, give me medeceen.'
I looked him over. On his neck I found
A spot that sent me from him, as from plague.
'You fool,' I cried, 'You have the leprosy.'
He did not say a word. He left the house
As if he had been stunned, and that same day,
With words to no one, he had disappeared.

"Then I thought of McGregor's wife and him.
Well, it was hell! I knew what I should do,
But feared to do it. So I took a chance.
I thought things were all right, for weeks had passed
And nothing happened at McGregor's house
Except the usual things. I felt at ease.
McGregor came one day and said, 'My wife
Is not as well as usual, and her face
Has queer marks on it.'

Then I lost my voice . . .
I felt the cold sweat rush out over me.
McGregor stared at me and said, 'You fool,
If you are sober, come and fix her up.'

"I went with him . . . She was a leper then.
As best I could I told him. And she wept
And moaned, and there her half-mad husband stood,
All white and still, with struggles such as men
May seldom know, within his heart. At last
He said, 'That settles it. We go from here.
If the authorities should find this out
They'd send her to a colony.'
I stared
At him and pitied him, and, damn the woman,
I could have strangled her in human hate.

"McGregor made plans, then he made more plans.
The outcome of them was this ship you saw
Sail out of silence back to silence . . . So
Two lepers live now in that ship that sails
About this island day by day, and month
By month, and year by year—a little ship
From Nowhere bound for Nowhere until Death!"

I.

There is a dusty road that goes
  Among the farms, and all the day
  Its dust is stirred by loads of hay
And brown bare feet, and no repose
Comes with the gloom, for then the teams
  Go with the lovers into town,
Or some young cavaliers of Dreams
  Drive only up the road or down.
And down this road there is a brook,
  A wooded hill, and from the road
A lane turns off as if it took
  Its way just to escape the load
Of weary traffic, never done,
As some impetuous, hopeful son
Among these farms has turned away
To seek for Beauty and the gay,
Wild dreams that called him, while his kin
Spoke of his going like a sin,
Yet envied him, and seeing less
Of him loved more his uselessness.

II.

We turned into the lane and heard
The happy chatter of a bird
Beside its nest, and far away
We heard the creaking loads of hay
Go on the road. About our feet
Was uncut clover red and sweet,

And under willows, silver, cool,
We saw skies mirrored in a pool—
And there I wondered as I stood
Why there was not more brotherhood
Between Land-toil and Beauty . . . Sod
Was warm and fragrant, and a god
Had left the echoes of his reed
Where willow leaves and thrushes heed.

And then I heard down in the field,
Where men toiled on with muscles steeled,
A voice, hard for the struggle, say,
"A rain would play hell with this hay."

Things that are Beauty for one spoil
Some other's work, and some one's toil
Another's bit of Beauty mars!
Thank God, we still may keep the Stars!

III.

I saw a grown girl coming down
  The field with water for the men.
Her hair fell golden in the wind.
  She stopped and bound it up again.

Her thin dress by the wind was pressed
  (Was it in passion or in play?)
Against the full growth of her breast . . .
  The men looked up. She looked away.

VI.

You saw me staring at the girl
  And then you stared at me.
Why did you come so close and kiss
  My lips so passionately?
I would not have you quite so young,
  Or quite so shy as she.

V.

There is a strong young apple tree
  In growth-dreams hushed.
Its many apples in the sun
  Have not yet blushed.

And in this place off of the road
  May grow unfound
This fruit, for hard, cold winds to shake
  Down to the ground.

Wasted the beauty, gone the dream
  It knew above!
What if one time you had not found
  My love?

VI.

Was that a faun that stirred the grass
To musky perfumes where we pass?
What pagan god has tuned the trees
And sowed the seeds of sorceries?
The red of clover haunts my eyes,
The passion of the sunlight flies

Into my being. Throbbing bees
Are gathering honey as we go
Through melodies all thrilled and low.
I look at you and something grips
My heart, and sun is on my lips.
The sun is on your hair and breast,
And in your eyes, and you have pressed
The sunlight closer, till it burns
And all the place to fire turns—
I cannot see the clover's red
Or green fruit growing overhead . . .
Only I know with what strange power
The bee creeps down into the flower
In blinding passion, thrills and clings,
Then leaves with sweetness on his wings.

VII.

I saw a little boy one day
  With berry stains upon his face
Come back to heated streets and gray
  From some near country-place,
And every one who saw the child
Remembered many things, and smiled.

You shake the sunbeams from your hair,
  And neatly bind it up again—
And smile as if you did not care!
  Blame me for laughing then!
"Hush, dear," you say, and try to frown
When I would tease the splendor down.

THE VILLAGE OF THE DOVES

The road went lazily along the hill
And then dropped slowly into that small town
We saw like patch-work in the valley, brown,
And gray, with dull trees very squat and still.
An old man peered at us. His window sill
Was much the color of his face. A frown
Turned to a smile, and then we settled down
For him to smoke with us and talk at will.

Three doves flew near. A dozen burros moped,
Scorned by a mangy dog . . . No lovely face,
And yet we sensed a Life that dreams and loves,
With browns and grays, where sandy streets had sloped
For years to sand. I asked, "What is this place?"
He said, "Señor, the Village of the Doves."

I HEARD A THRUSH WHEN TWILIGHT CAME

I heard a thrush when twilight came
  Song of the woes it had not known—
Of hearts that burned in rainbow flame,
  Of barren fields where seeds were sown.

And then it sang of happy trees
  Where fruit is golden in the sun,
Of raptures and of mysteries
  Through which the songs of seasons run.

And I was sadder for the song
  Of rapture than the song of pain—
For one lost gladness, gone so long,
  Came back and could not hurt again!

THE COLONEL'S LADY

Outside the Colonel's house in Corozal
Were many roses, and the neighbors said
The thorns were on the inside. Very well
The Colonel hid their scratches, and his wife,
Ten years his junior, did almost as well.
And he was like a steel trap, quick and bright,
And set for action, but some ladies said
That, on great provocation, he would drink
More liquor than he needed, and without
The slightest provocation he would smile
Into a woman's eyes . . . Perhaps they knew.

His wife was like a jungle flower that grew
Too much in shade and lost its coloring
At fullest bloom. The coloring she lacked
In looks her bright imagination saved
And made pink turn to purple. She had heard
So much about the Tropics' wickedness
That in her thoughts she saw that she was like
A slim white lily growing in the center
Of flaming passion flowers circled near.
One lady, just a little worldly wise,
Said that the Colonel took his wife one time
When he was making New Year's resolutions—
And that she was the only one he kept!

Tongues wag like palm leaves in the tropic towns,
But do more harm and are not half as bright.
And gossip drifting to the Colonel's Lady,

As she was called by others envious
Of her position, gave her many things
To worry over, and the least of these
Was not Juanita who had served them well
For half a season. For Juanita's eyes
Were like dark pools of water in the hills
When twilight and the jungle fall in love . . .
What chance had Manuel who often came
To win Juanita with his soft guitar
Perchance the Colonel even glanced at her?

The Colonel's Lady watched with busy eyes.
One night the Colonel touched Juanita's hand
When she was pouring water. Was it chance
Or was it but a sign agreed upon?

The Colonel left the house for Panama
To spend the night, he said, and then his wife
Said to the girl,
"Juanita, for tonight
You sleep in my room and I sleep in yours."
And, quite surprised, the girl obeyed so well
The Colonel's Lady smiled in righteousness.

Rain started pounding on the roof. The dark
Came quickly after, and Juanita went
Into the room with things she loved to touch,
Soft pillows, and the laces soft as mist
Above the little streams of Panama,
And dreaming there of sudden wealth she slept.
And in Juanita's room the Colonel's Lady

Let down her hair, and touched it with perfume
That was Juanita's, then she robed herself
In filmy nightdress, and upon a bed
Not soft as she had hoped, she sat to wait
As if she hoped some one would enter there
And crush her cold lips, telling her of love.

Rain pounded on the roof. She heard her heart
Pound with the rain. She knew what she would do
When he came in. She'd give him kiss for kiss—
And then at last she'd turn on all the lights.
And she would say, "Well, Colonel, can it be
That you have lost your way in this small house?"
She thrilled to think how it would worry him
When she would gently speak about divorce . . .

She heard soft footsteps through the rush of rain.
They reached the door. They paused, and silently
Chill of the rain's breath filled the opened door
That softly closed. The room was warm and still.
A raincoat rustled, then was put aside.
Warm hands reached out to her, and, at the touch
Of her, strong arms held close and hot lips held
Her lips. She thought, through tumult in her brain,
"The Colonel never kissed me so before."

"Juanita," breathed a voice, and then she felt
A terror that was quick and powerful.
The voice that spoke was not her husband's voice.
She screamed, and footsteps that she had not heard
Before they reached the house, came pounding in

Across the porch, and then the door swung wide
And lights flashed on . . . The Colonel glared at them.
He saw his wife wild-eyed with fear and shame,
And Manuel who stood near by and shook
As with a chill from Chagre's poisoned swamps.

"Well, I'll be damned," the Colonel said, "What's this?
You yellow dog, what are you doing here?
And you—"
Cried Manuel, "Juanita's room!
She marry me last week. We want you not
To know for fear she have to leave this place.
I tell her I not come tonight, but then
I could not work for rain and came, and here
Juanita is not. How am I to blame?
The darkness, Señor! How was I to know?"

The Colonel stared. The Colonel's Lady wept.
And Manuel stood shaking as with chills.
"Go," said the Colonel, "What's the use of talk?"
And Manuel went out through pounding rain.
The Colonel's Lady wept and tried to speak
But had no time for words the Colonel went
So quickly from the room when he had said,
"You may live here until we are divorced."

She heard his quick, strong footsteps leave the house
And die away out in the pounding rain . . .

"SINCE YOUTH IS ALL FOR GLADNESS"

Since Youth is all for gladness,
  And dreams and rainbow-skies,
For rapture and moon-madness,
  Why are Youth's eyes so wise?

Since Youth is all for vaunting
  Adventures, scorning fears—
Is there not something haunting
  In Youth's incongruous tears?

O Youth must bleed and measure
  The days and span the sea—
But Age will keep for pleasure
  What Youth thought misery.

A MORNING ROAD SONG

There are roads that lead to temples
  And the bells chime far away,
And the white flames of the sunlight
  Throb upon the trappings gay . . .
Would *you* follow to the temples
  Or turn off to Mandalay?

There are roads that lead to silver
  And the crags shine hard and gray;
Through the silence of the mountains
  Slowly pack-trains lurch and sway . . .
Would *you* find a mine of silver
  Or turn back to Monterey?

Here's a road that leads to Somewhere
  And a voice has called today,
And I hear the leaves like music—
  Where's the piper I must pay?
Here's a road that leads to Somewhere—
  And I'm going all the way!

APPOINTMENTS

I cannot dine with you today
And hear how all your wealth does good,
I have an appointment with a thrush
That sings in a distant wood.

I cannot dance with you tonight
And hear your voice above each tune—
I have an appointment with a wind
That sings to greet the moon.

TO ONE BELOVÉD

Because I willed to have it so
I went last night where great trees grow,
And under them I made a bed
Of leaves and grasses, and my head
Was pillowed on the ripened clover . . .
It was beside a mountain stream
Where laden branches, bending over,
Make many patterns for a dream.
And there before I slept I heard
The leaves make melodies that stirred
An answer in my heart, and soon
New beauties flooded from the moon
About that cool, calm place. To me
Was given as to stream and grass and tree.
And now I come this morning to the town
    With sunlight over me,
As that stream from the heights goes down
    To give unto the Sea—
I am as grass that has known touch of dew,
I am as leaves the moonlight has shown through!

This is the morning that I may express
More understanding of your loveliness.

THE PRICE OF CORN

The World was hungry and War gave the Earth
Rich blood to drink in many lands. At home
John Kender had four fields; in three of these
He planted corn, because the price was high.
And when the sun had turned the corn to gold
And miser winds shook it to hear it rattle,
The farmer said, "The corn is ripe to husk."
And as he spoke the price of corn went higher.

Hard days he worked to bring the corn from field—
Up in the dusk and home when dusk was starred!

Two nights before he planned to have his corn
All husked his young wife told him that their child
Was hot with fever.
"It will pass," said John,
And, weary with his work, forgot the child,
Their first-born, now gaining the dignity
Of walking upright as a man-child should.

At noon next day while John wolfed down his food
His wife asked him to go into their room
To see the child who tossed about and listened
To nothing that she said. John went with her
And when he saw his little son he felt
A moment's fear and said, "You'd better send
To town and get the doctor."
"But you know
There's no one I can send. We are so far,

And every one is busy husking corn,"
Replied his wife, sharply, to hide her tears.
"You go yourself. The corn that's left can wait
A day or two," she added.
With no word
He took a horse and started out for town.
Along the road the wind shook fields of corn,
And John was angry that he could not be
In his own field. Half way to town he met
The doctor driving rapidly. They stopped,
And when the doctor heard about the child
He said, "Well, I am glad you did not wait
Like Simon Miller did. I'm on my way
To his house now. He was so wild with corn
He did not come for me. Last night his wife
Crept to the barn and got a horse and rode
Like mad to town. And when I reached the farm
Their child was dying. That's a price of corn
Higher than he reckoned on."
"My God,"
Shouted John Kender, "hurry to my place."
And as they went John paid the price of corn.

SONG

I have loved the rainbows
  And the wild gusts of rain,
And white ships in the dark storms,
  And leopard-women twain.

I have loved the red dawns
  And waters deep and blue,
And roads that burned with moonlight—
  How can I love you?

YOU ARE NOT OF A TIME OR PLACE

You are not of a time or place. You are
Not of a dream or of an incident.
In all times and all places my heart went
You followed. Still you follow . . . Not a star
Are you to lead me in the dark, not far
And proud with crown or empty sacrament.
O could I find in nearness more content,
O could I grasp, or see, the things that bar!

I touch you, as through bars, when my hot hand
Touches a rose in darkness. I have kissed
Your lips on other lips that came between
Our lips a moment after. When I stand
Looking in lovely eyes, as through warm mist,
I see your eyes—then ache that I have seen.

I.

I shall remember the bugles
  Though no more calls may be,
For they are part of my being,
  Sounding reveille.

If ever I shun the morrow,
  If ever my banners fall,
Shrill in my dreams at morning,
  Call, O Bugles, call!

II.

I have seen the sharp pain
  In the eyes that see no more,
I have seen the torn limbs
  That are no longer sore—
And I have seen the gold stars
  With silence at the door.

I have seen a man's smile
  When Death was in his eyes,
I have heard the quick breath
  And the last goodbyes,
And I have wept to know them
  With tears like battle-cries!

But O, such pain is blesséd,
  And O, such loss is gain,
And such death is like living
  When men are men again! . . .

But, Lord of Nations, tell us
That Wars no more remain!

III.

A bird is singing in the dusk
That smells of distant rain.
The stirred grass gives a scent of musk—
O Heart now sing again!

"What shall I sing?" (The voice is sad)
"Of men who had to die,
Of maidens ravished, wives gone mad?"
Be still, my Heart, I cry!

IV.

You make me weary with your chatter
About the things your Soul will do
When you are dead. What will it matter
If all the words you say are true?

You have life now but are not growing—
If you had wings you would not fly!
If Life has little worth the knowing
You may find less when you must die.

For me, I'll take what Life is giving,
Earth-born, I gladly sing of birth— —
Till all my body, worn with living,
Sleeps—and is still a part of Earth!

V.

I think I shall not go today
To strive with any one.

I'll drink, on hill-roads far away,
The golden wine of Sun.

And maple leaves, like dancing girls,
Will shake their silver shoon,
And weeping willows toss their curls,
And whisper of the Moon.

And I shall watch and drink my best
And dream, and wink at Mirth,
Till giddy, drunk, I clasp the breast
Of many-passioned Earth.

The warmth that blushed the slim wild rose
Earth's great breast lifts to me—
When my cold body seeks repose
How different it will be!

VI.

Ah, men are building strong and high
These days,—for dreams remain!
And here I sit and wonder why
Old Tom is drunk again!

Ah, women have new looms to try
And love is still as sweet.
And here I sit while passes by
A girl who walks the street!

Ah, Life is building just the same
As Life built ages past—
The towers strong, the rainbow flame,
The quick leaves for the blast!

THE MURDERER GOD SENTENCED

The leaves were falling and winds came and went,
Slow shuttles weaving red and gold and brown
Into the stuff of Dreams. Along the lane
I met an old man coming home from town.
His face was like a yellow leaf that long
Had known the touch of rain, but when he spoke
His voice was like a lively autumn wind.
We talked awhile and smoked our pipes. I asked,
"How did you come to stay so long in town?"
He shifted some small bundles that he held
And said, "There was a hanging. One who killed
Was killed by Justice in the Courthouse yard."

Before I had a question he went on
Speaking in that same liveliness of winds,
"But never have I seen a murderer
Sentenced as justly as the one I know
God sentenced in this region years ago.
I shall not name him, but when I was young
I worked for him and knew him very well.
He owned a farm and was the greediest
And meanest man that I have ever known.
Flax was his pet crop and he built great bins
To store it in and boasted of his wealth,
And hired half-wits from the county farm
To keep the price of labor down. One day
One of them slipped into a half-filled bin
And shouted, and each crazy move he made
Lowered him deeper, and his struggles took

Him from the bin's edge to its center. There
He sank. I got an axe and started in
To chop an opening to let the flax
Out on the barn floor. Then the farmer rushed
At me and struck me."
"Will you spoil the work
Of days," he shouted, "for a half-wit? Go
About your business. I know of a way
To get him out."
Later we lowered planks
To make a platform in the bin and groped
About with grappling hooks and after while
We pulled the fellow out. Due the delay
To save the flax bin not a breath was left
In his poor body.
Well, that flax was sold
And a new crop came in to fill the bins."

"When they were partly filled the farmer climbed
Up on the edge to see the flax. He stooped,
So we supposed, to test the flax and fell,
Just as the half-wit fell, into the bin.
He cried for help. I found him mad with fear
Threshing about, out in the bin with flax
Up to his neck.
"Cut down the bin," he screamed,
And when I came back with the axe I heard
No sound from him, and worked like mad to cut
An opening. Out flooded slimy flax
Until the floor was covered, and at last
We pulled him out. He found his breath and moaned,

But he was crazed. He died, some years ago,
As simple-minded as the half-wit killed
To save a few days labor on the flax."

"Well, dusk is coming. I must hurry home,"
He said, and rattled off among the leaves.

THE DANCE

There's a Charity dance in the town tonight—
  For the poor five thousand miles from town!
And little Meg Wynne with her eyes so bright
  Has bartered her Soul for a silken gown
To wear to the dance, for she sighed and cried
Over her rags for fear that her pride
Would be hurt if she went in a garb less fair
Than that of the Ladies who would be there.
O there will be laughter and floods of light—
There's a Charity dance in the town tonight!

There's a Charity dance in the town tonight,
  Far from the alleys that starve in the town,
To feed the starvelings far from the sight—
And little Meg Wynne in her silken gown
Will smile her brightest and hardly care
For the proud old Ladies who fret and stare
And whisper and wait for a time to say,
"I don't see how *they* dress that way!"
And ho! The music frets in the air—
There's a dance—but Charity is not there!

A PIPE SMOKER TO A COQUETTE

I smoke my pipe . . . If I loved you I'd fill
  My heart with you as my pipe's ruddy bowl
Is filled with good tobacco. I would will
  That there be fire then. My breath's control
Would draw the sweetness from you, and your soul
  (If you have one) would burn. (You must allow
Me this one fancy). Go now and console
  Yourself you are not ashes like these now
Knocked from my pipe for careless winds to blow
Since I am through with them. And even so
As now I fill my pipe again I'd fill
My heart again . . .
                The night is very still.
If it were not for stars I'd think of rain . . .
Ah, bless you, Good Pipe, we're alone again!

AUTUMN NOCTURNE

The restlessness of dying things
  Is in the night.
Only the moon-mad cricket sings,
  And cold and white
The Moon shines through the trees.
  And we go through
Maze of Earth-Mysteries.
  I turn to you
For love and hope, and wistfully
You turn to me.

The restlessness of things that pass
  Is in the air.
O once we touched this stricken grass
  Now everywhere
Fades the old miracle.
  So it shall be
When Death takes toll, as well,
  Of you or me.
We shall seek glories dreamed again
And seek in vain.

FOLLOW THE CROWS

The crows were flying to the south
  Of Samuel Miller's land
Where on a marsh with grasses tall
  The crowded willows stand.

We went to Samuel Miller's house
  And on the door we read
The writing sprawling wide and bold—
  "Follow the Crows," it said!

For twenty years he lived alone
  And went his secret way—
And why he left or where he went
  Not one of us could say.

The writing found upon the door
  Was not like his we knew;
But no one knew just what to think
  Or thought just what to do.

And Mary Waldron, when she died
  Bearing a nameless child,
Thought of our tales, and screamed all night
  With voice grown loud and wild.

"Follow the Crows," she screamed that night,
  And nothing more she said.
We knew that she had heard us talk—
  We pitied her when dead!

And later on, for lack of work,
  Near one chill evening's close
We read the writing on the door
  And followed then the crows.

The crows were flying to the south
  Of Samuel Miller's land.
We reached the marsh with grasses tall
  Where crowded willows stand.

And on a spot among the trees
  The crows flocked all around;
They rose with caws and heavy wings.
  The wood took up the sound.

The grass was dying of the frost,
  And with the grass and stones
We saw, before we turned away,
  A body's half-picked bones.

SONGS WHILE THE FIRST SNOW FALLS

I.

I know a field that Summer long
  Had struggled with the drouth; and grain,
That promised much when Spring was strong
  And beautiful with sun or rain,
Drooped in the heat of burning noon.
Then dwarfed and browned it struggled still
To grow, but when the Harvest Moon
Came there the grain had failed its will.
And chaff was blown and stalks at last
Were broken where the winds had passed.
O then I saw the first snow fall
Upon that field and cover all
The chaff and broken stalks. The skies
Poured sunlight on the snow, and eyes
Were strained with brightness for a day—
And when the snow had gone away,
Across that field that failed its dream,
Among the broken stalks a gleam
Of fresh green came . . . A little while
To dream again, and, dreaming, smile!
That was a year ago . . . And then
A new Spring sowed that field again,
A golden season came! But, O,
Is there a Sower who may sow
In hearts again? What seeds are these
Now falling white among the trees?

II.

The first who walks new-fallen snow
Must show the way he chose to go,
But when a thousand feet have passed—
Then who the First or Last may know?

III.

O heart that beats so restlessly,
  Burning with Life, the slow
Sure fire that consumes you, flee
  Out to the falling snow.

Grow calm again, and greatly stilled
  Take cool balm from above.
My heart replies, "If I grow chilled
  What shall you do for Love?"

IV.

O it was very long ago
That hearts learned language of the snow . . .
The snow was falling through the trees—
The King was old and ill at ease,
And he was weary of his crown.
The Fool was sick of cap and bells.
Then said the King, as he looked down
From his bright throne, "O Fool, my gown
Of gold put on. The blown snow tells
My heart of tombs, and I would be
A jester for this hour and see
Your splendor in my place of State."
And so the wise Fool played the King,

And so the old King played the Fool.
Then came great tumult at the gate
Before the palace, and the ring
Of steel on steel. There was a pool
Of blood upon each stair and hall.
The Fool who played the King then came
Down from his throne with eyes of flame,
And with his sword he met the foe
And struck the knights who faced him low
And won the fight. The King who played
The Fool in shadow sat and prayed
With fear upon his face, until
The foe had fled and halls were still.
And then he heard his warriors sing,
"Long live the King! Long live the King!"

V.

My heart has glowed with rainbows,
  My feet have warmed the clods;
I know the wind has spoken
  When the willow nods.

But now the snow is falling—
  I have not had my fill
Of hill-blooms and of rainbows
  And roads across the hill.

Whiteness and chill and silence—
  The devil take the three!
When snow has covered my love
  Then it may cover me!

VI.

What shall I tell my old Love?
  Ah, yes! At last I know—
"Your love was like a garden
  All cold and still with snow.
You told me that when Spring came
  The golden fruit would grow."

What shall I tell my new Love?
  Only this I'll say,
"My heart was chilled and hungry
  And Spring was far away—
Your love was like a thrilled house
  Where Summer came to stay."

SEEDS OF THE THISTLE

George Martin had the finest yard in town.
For years his care had made it smooth and green.
He had the freshest grass, and earliest flowers
And latest flowers at their loveliest.
Next to his yard, upon the right, the grounds
Of William Pearson were without a weed—
As if they profited by good example,
But in the corner lot near Pearson's grew
Grass in a battle with all sorts of weeds.
John Hepple, working in the mills by day,
Was much too busy after work to help
The grass win over weeds, for he would sit
For hours cursing men who gave him work,
And told all men who cared to hear him talk
How he would change things if he had a chance.
And while he talked the weeds gained victories
Over the grass, and from the winds came down
Seeds of the thistle, and they settled there
In Hepple's yard to grow; for there all things
Had equal right to strive and grow or die.

Hepple had led a strike that closed the mills
And many hungry people in the town
At last turned on him, and he went away
And left the thistles growing in his yard.

Martin and Pearson met one afternoon
Upon the street by Hepple's yard. They stood

And looked about the place and frowned at it.
Said Pearson, "We should have these weeds cut down
And burned before they come to seed again."

"It is not our affair," said Martin then,
"We keep our own yards. Let him do the same.
That is a brand for Hepple in this town."

And so they walked away and each day gave
The thistles bloom that was the hope of seeds.

The leaves were falling—multicolored dreams
The trees could keep no longer, and the winds—
Ah, were they playful or but careless, strong,
And mad with power driving dead leaves down
The streets those leaves had shaded?
Martin went
One afternoon to gather up the leaves
Piled in a far, still corner of his yard.
He bowed to gather leaves, and then he looked
Hard at his hand, then stared hard at the ground.
Pearson, who wandered down to watch his friend,
Heard Martin talking to himself.
"What's up?"
He called across the yard, and Martin raised
His angry eyes, and angry voice, and said,
"Thistles. A small one, just above the grass,
Stuck in my fingers as I picked the leaves.
Damn Hepple and his thistles! Now I'll go

And cut his thistles down, or they will be
Scattered all over town."
And Pearson said,
"It's rather late now for the job, but still
I'll go to help you."
But another year
Many young thistles lifted in the grass
Of many yards, and some men dug them out—
And others left the thistles go to seed.

A YOUNG GIRL FLEES THE COMING STORM

A young girl flees the coming storm.
  Winds lift her swirling dress;
They clutch at her as if to bare
  Her breast's soft loveliness.

She is afraid, and flees the storm
  That spreads its net above—
And though Love is far mightier
  She will not flee from Love!

WINDS THAT HAVE MOVED THE FRIENDLY TREES, 1917

Winds, that have moved the friendly trees to speak,
With lyric voices, to us when we went—
How long ago it seems—down roads to seek
New gladness and new dreams and wonderment,
When Spring comes back you will not find us there,
And will not miss us, and the grass will grow
And bluebirds sing and Earth-life thrill the air
As one glad Spring ago.

In our mid-Western lands some one shall sow . .
Sunlight and starlight and the quiet rains
Shall fall on peaceful fields that shall not know
How blood is spilled on battered hills and plains
Across the seas. Homes shall keep Liberty—
Although the olden happiness gives place
To thoughtful hopes and faith like comes to be
In each loved absent face.

The moonlight shall look in on places strange
To tears, and tears shall glisten, but the Night
Shall hold no driving foes. No bitter change
Of hosts that ravish waits the coming light.
The Light of Dawn! . . . What broken homes are these?
What hearts by strife and sorrow stricken dumb?
What pitted fields? What mangled, helpless trees? . . .
O bleeding France, we come!

LONESOMENESS

When I was on the old farm
  I heard the City call,
I saw its lights in dreams then,
  Its towers bright and tall!

I heard its silks that rustled,
  I saw its eyes that gleamed
With all the hopes of all things
  That I had ever dreamed.

Then I went to the City—
  And many nights of rain
I laid and wept for kind leaves
  To touch my window pane!

A FAREWELL

Farewell, Spring, and at your going
  Know that no one can forget
Days of magic, dawn winds blowing
  Leaf and grass and violet,
Days of dreaming, days of sowing—
  No one can forget!

Farewell, Spring. The cloud-ships waken
  With the winds. O take my heart
Down the sky-seas you have taken
  Now that you at last depart.
There are dreams you leave forsaken—
  Take, O take my heart!

THE GRAVE

I knew that they had not forgotten me—
    Although it's many a day
    Since footsteps passed this way.
I have heard the leaves of the maple tree
Grow, then fall in death upon my mound
Here at the edge of the garden ground.

Long did I work upon these fertile hills
    And all the ground had known
    The will of my sinew and bone
Before I died. All this fulfills
Promise I made myself while my children grew
To take my place, to dig and hew.

I knew that they had not forgotten me—
    One of my sons is here
    Now in the Spring of the year,
With blooms or the roots of a budding tree . . .
The footsteps sound like Caspar's, very slow
And sturdy—like he used to hoe.

I knew that they had not forgotten me—
    It's Caspar . . . His spade is keen.
    He digs my mound that is green . . .
God, he is planting parsley!
Why won't they let me rest now my work is done?
Well, Caspar was always a thrifty son!

THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT GO TO WAR

The man who would not go to war was young.
His strength was known through all the neighboring
farms—
And yet, he would not heed his Nation's call.
He worked upon the farm that was the pride
Of that locality. He told each one
Who spoke of war that he would keep his place
Till he was forced to go. When work was done
He roamed about the farm, and in his eyes
Was love of rich land and its fruitfulness.
And still he did not seem to love the Flag
That had made sure his young prosperity.
He sat at night and thought of level fields,
Of grain that turned to gold beneath the sun,
While other men went forth to fight and die.

His father, who had faced a firing-line,
Was half ashamed of him. He told his son,
"Your younger brother can stay here and help
Upon the farm. Even your sister knows
Enough to help me well enough that you
Can go to war, and still the farm will be
As good as ever."
But the son replied,
"I love this land."
"But not enough to fight
For it," his father shouted angrily . . .

The man who would not go to war was tired.
Early he went to bed, and thought awhile
Of crops he planted, then in troubled sleep
War came to him. In dreams he saw a host
Of strangers on the sky line. Rifles cracked
And red death fell on his belovéd fields.
Land that his father gained from wilderness
Was plowed with shells. And in his dream he saw
His father, with his gray head bared to Death,
Stand on his door step with his Country's flag
Waving defiance. Then his father fell
And the flag fell across his silent breast.
The house leaped into flame. His sister rushed
Out of the door and raised the flag again.
She fell and over her the flag. He saw
A flash of fire from the doorway. There
His brother stood firing as steadily
As those who faced him. From behind him came
His mother—and again the flag was raised . . .

And madly in the dream he broke the chains
That seemed to hold him and cried out in sleep
A battle-cry that echoed through the house.
His brother wakened and called out to him,
"What is the matter with you?"
"Go to sleep,"
He answered him, "I'll tell you in the morning."
And in the morning he left for town,
With fire in his eyes, to volunteer.

DEWDROPS

The dewdrops are the tears of Stars that weep
For gladness, hearing from some crystal spheres
Such harmonies as take from olden tears
The bitterness of Oceans that made deep
Each tear that marked an Age's cheek ere Sleep
Came to the Age and turned its dreams to years
Of growing beauty and of dying fears
For a new Age that on the Quest should keep.

Or are the dewdrops tears the Stars let fall
Because the Ages blunder and are long
To find the way where sad tears may not be?
Because so many hearts have heard the call
Of pipes in star-lanes, and with answering song
Crept near the Stars—and stopped on Calvary?

SONG

You ask me sometimes, "Do you love me?"
I answer, "Yes—my heart still beats."
You ask me sometimes, "Do I please you?"
I answer, "Yes—the sun still meets
With my approval."
Then you smile—
As if you knew it all the while!

I HAD FORGOTTEN

I had forgotten, so it seems,
The dear companionship of Dreams,
A little while—I heard old lies
Then saw the true dreams of your eyes.

I had forgotten—Ah, but then
I never can forget again!
A little while—how soon it seems
Life comes and goes, then lives in Dreams!

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1917

I bring no wreaths of holly to the shrine
I keep for you within the troubled days;
No mistletoe I bring; no crown of bays.
Instead I bring dreams that are yours and mine,
And will fight for them. I take no wine
Of quick desires and of sweet delays
Of fancy wreathing mists near hell that sways
With might of conflict on each firing line.

And yet—and yet I dream of other nights
When hand in hand we watched the fire glow.
How red the days, how long and brave since then!
And so I face the morrow for the rights
Of firesides that love like ours may know,
Fostered by Peace and the good will of Men.

THE DESERT AND THE SEA

I love the Desert with its glow
  Of lights unreal, its far
Flung colors of the dawn, its slow
  Still passion in a star.

I love the sea with depth of blues,
  Its waves pearl-crested cast
Upon bright sands, its changing hues
  Where winds or ships have passed.

But have you seen a storm come down,
  Swirled sand and crashing wind
Upon the desert, leaving brown
  And gray still things behind?

And have you seen a storm that slashed
  The smooth breast of the sea
And freed a thing that writhed and dashed
  In mad immensity?

The desert's rainbows, and its gray,
  The sea's wrath, and its blue—
Here on my heart is marked the way
  I came in loving you.

SONG

Would you go in chariot
Of golden cloud, Milady?
Or are you happy that we go
Where the gods and grasses know
That we kiss where nooks are shady
On the road to Singing Water?

Many shady nooks there are.
Heigh-ho! Dawn's Daughter!

MARGARITA

I found her walking where the yuccas sway
To winds from ranges of the stars that bring
Desires for all things of which they sing
And quick belief in all words they say.
Her lips were like red flowers on the way
To clear spring water, and there seemed to cling
About her breast a warmth of sun like Spring
Gives to a bud that blossoms in a day.

She said, "Señor, you have been far from here
And know so many things I do not know
Of Life and Love. Tell me, or I shall weep,
Must I wed one whose house is very near
Although his kisses leave me cold as snow,
When one long absent kisses me in sleep?"

You should be flattered to be robbed so frankly.
But I suppose you think my method crude,
Not in accord with all the best traditions
That you respect. I understand you came
To rob not one but many, in this place,
By your well-named and carefully worked out
Investment. Keep your hands up! That is good.
You see, I am not blessed with all your wits.
I rob one at a time and take my chance,
While you are clever. You can rob a widow
And make her think that she is given cause
For gratitude to you. In other words,
You rob within the Law and I without,
For I am frank by nature. I was once
A rising politician, but I failed
At that because—Keep up your hands, I say!
These crisp bills which I gladly take from you
No doubt came to you by no honest means,
And since I do not know from whence they came
I keep them, with regrets, for my own use.
I must apologize because I take
Your wallet in this fashion. Had I time
To think out schemes I might have pleased you more
By selling you some stocks I bought from you.
Keep up your hands! Your memory grows weak . . .
I know that you are used to shaking hands.

There are so many ways of robbing one,
That, after observation, I have come

To think my way is best. You know, it leaves
One no delusions . . .
There was once a man
Who bought land from you—bad land, brush and stones—
Where you had vowed to let the water in
And make the garden spot of all the world.
He had three thousand dollars to his name—
You talked four thousand dollars out of him,
And knew you lied, and then forgot him. Well,
That man had wife and child, who went with him
Upon that land. Your promised water failed
Him in his need. He had delusions still . . .
That's the unfair part of your robbery!
He starved on that land with his wife and child
For three years, went through hell, came out again
And shut the gates. Then, desperate, he drilled
At his expense, with money born of blood,
For water—and struck oil . . . He lost his wife
About the time he found the oil. She died
From overwork and misery. The child
Died shortly after, and the oil flowed up
With riches from that curséd ground. The man
Sold out for a good fortune—which he spent
Trying to heal a broken heart . . . Now go—
And keep your hands up till you find the turn
In this road to your right. Again I say
I think I steal the better; just because
I rob no one but thieves. Keep up your hands!

TO THE NIGHT WIND

I.

O I have heard you, Night Wind, when the Spring
  Was waking in a night of crowded stars,
Singing such songs as make the World's heart sing,
  And as you sang it seemed the earth's old scars
Were covered with new grasses and with dew;
  And nothing ached save with the sweet desire
Of love and growth that is forever new,
  With dreams that build the soul's white altar fire.

O Night Wind, let my heart in Springtime be
To you as grasses growing and as blooms.
While past the crowded stars God watches me,
O let it keep the stillness and perfumes.
And make it glad as wild seeds that break through
The hardened mold to starlight and the dew.

II.

And, Night Wind, when the grain was like the sea
  Of rippled gold beneath the summer moon,
Oft I have heard you singing tenderly,
  And as you sang I heard a mother croon;
I heard the under-songs of streams that fed
  The roots of roses, and your singing told
How the wild buds burst into flowers red,
  And how the grain was turned to living gold.

O Night Wind, let my heart in Summer be
To you as grain that ripens and as fruit

That waits a little longer on the tree
That still has life that thrills in branch and root.
And make it fearless as the things that know
They give but payment for their right to grow.

III.

And, O Night Wind, when leaves were drifting down,
  And the great, wide-eyed moon was full of dreams,
When all the harvest fields were hushed and brown,
  And mists hung listless over meadow streams,
Oft I have heard you chanting till the night
  Was like a temple where the heart could rest,
Where all things that had sought and found the Light
  Were called again unto the mother-breast.

O Night Wind, let my heart in Autumn be
To you as leaves that give their all and go,
As harvest fields where naught is left to see,
Because their grain was reaped, but let me know
Some heart is fuller for the gift mine gave,
Some soul is braver that my soul is brave.

IV.

O Night Wind, let my heart be like all things
  That mortal are, but let my soul arise
With you and go upon untiring wings
  As you go, singing, bold and free and wise
Yet tender as you are, and full of might,
  Through changing seasons with their changeless end,
To all the hearts that listen in the night
  To sing their dreams, to urge them, and befriend.

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And, sometimes, I would give myself to storm
And scatter fears among the hearts that feed
On other hearts eager and true, and warm
With love of life for which they oft must bleed.
But O, how I would sing when seeds broke through
The hardened mold to starlight and the dew!

CAMOUFLAGE

When brother John came back from War he made
Believe that he was blind, to fool his wife.
He wore black glasses all the time and had
Someone to guide him and to read to him.
He told me all about it when his wife
Knew that his eyes were cured. And he had been
Pretending treatment for his blindness, too,
And did it very well. His eyes were sore
When he came home and that gave him the plan
Of playing blind. He said that he had doubted
His wife to some extent before he left,
And wondered how she looked and acted since
She thought his eyes were useless. She had been
Raised in the city, as you know, and found
Life in a small town rather dull. She took
More pleasure, than he liked, in wearing clothes
A trifle show-like, and her cheeks at times
Were touched with rouge. His friends would talk to her
With just a little more of enjoyment
Than he found pleasing. So he went to War
With some vague doubts, although he never spoke
To her about her ways. You know he is
A rather sober, grim young man . . . Folks wondered
That he had married such a charming girl.

Well, as I said, when he came back from War
He made believe that he was blind. His wife

Cried over him and made a child of him
And since no money-matters troubled them
She did her best to make him happy. Now
The two of them work overtime to make
The big house full of happiness. He saw,
The first day he came back, that she was dressed
In plainer clothes and that her cheeks were pale.
One day she wore a new dress plainer still
Than were the others, but she seemed to look
Better in plain things. He came back one day
With his attendant, from a near-by town,
Took his black glasses off, and told his wife
His eyes were cured. And she was wild with joy . . .

That night she said, "John, have you noticed that
I do not look so girlish any more?
You used to say you loved the silly things
I wore when you first knew me. Look at me,
And tell me if you think I look too old.
I always liked plain things, but they cost more
Than other kinds and I could not afford
To buy them until we were married, then
I was afraid you'd think I looked too old—
And kept on wearing things I did not like
Because you liked them. When you came home blind
I did not think about the change, but now
I know you'll notice—and you'll think I'm old
And then you will not love me."
There were tears
In eyes and voice, he said, with him at loss

Whether to laugh or cry.
"Dear girl," he said,
"Wear anything that pleases you and that
Will please me. Now let's talk a little while
About that word that puzzles you. It comes
From France and is called Camouflage. It means—"

THE LARK AND THE GUINEA HENS

Some guinea hens that wandered far afield
Came to a lark resting upon a reed.
"What do you do?" they chattered at the lark.
The lark replied, "I sing."
The guinea hens
Laughed loud at this, and one said to the lark,
"We never heard you sing. Account for that!"
Replied the lark, "I sing near gates of blue
That open on the vales of Paradise
When Morning comes with flowers in her hair.
If you knew how to listen you could hear."
Again the guinea hens laughed loud. They cried,
"That is a poor excuse. Sing if you can
And we shall listen."
So the lark arose
Happy to get away from them, and sang
Up, up into blue-flowered fields of Sky.

"He hid behind that tree," the guinea hens
Screeched to each other, well pleased with themselves.
They made such noise they could not hear the song
And were quite sure the lark had lied to them . . .
And, out of sight in vasts beyond their thoughts,
The lark sang—and forgot the guinea hens!

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